

Message Text

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44

ACTION EA-14

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FM AMCONSUL HONG KONG

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8109

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

AMEMBASSY SAIGON

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

USLO PEKING

CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE HONG KONG 8981

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

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SUBJ: PEKING ON THE CAMBODIAN SITUATION

SUMMARY: A LOW-LEVEL CHINESE ARTICLE ON CAMBODIA REFERRED TO "SHAM PEACE" AND "POLITICAL INTRIGUES" TO SAVE THE GKR. HOWEVER THE MAIN PURPOSE SEEMED TO BE TO EMBARASS THE SOVIETS. ELITE CHINESE COMMENT ON CAMBODIA SILL AVOIDS PROJECTING FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS. END SUMMARY

1. A LONG ARTICLE OF SEPT 6 BY AN NCNA CORRESPONDENT OFFERS PEKING'S FIRST ASSESSMENT SINCE THE BOMBING HALT OF THE CURRENT SITUATION IN CAMBODIA. THE ARTICLE STATED THAT THE PEOPLE'S ARMED FORCES IN CAMBGOBEVQRE KEEPING UP THEIR OFFENSIVES IN THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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CURRENT RAINY SEASON AND THAT THE COLLAPSE OF THE PHNOM PENH

REGIME WAS "UNAVOIDABLE." HOWEVER, THE ARTICLE DID NOT SUGGEST THAT TOTAL VICTORY WAS IMMINENT AND IT SEEMED LESS SANGUINE ON THIS SCORE THAN CHINESE STATEMENTS EARLIER THIS SPRING (HONG KONG 4411).

2. IN THE FIRST REFERENCE IN CHINESE-ORIGINATED COMMENT SINCE LAST MAY TO A POLITICAL SETTLEMENT, THE LOW-LEVEL NCNA ARTICLE NOTED THE "PLOT OF HSAM PEACE HATCHED BY THE TRATOROUS LON NOL CLIQUE." "THE TWO SUPERPOWERS," THE WRITER CHARGED, ARE RESORTING TO "ALL KINDS OF POLITICAL INTRIGUES TO SAVE THE MORIBUND PHNOM PENH CLIQUE." NO MATTER HOW THEIR "STRATEGIMS" MAY CHANGE, THE ARTICLE SAID, THEIR OBJECTIVE IS "TO KEEP THE TRATOROUS CLIQUE INTACT AS A TOOL FOR CONTENDING HEGEMONY IN CAMBODIA." THE WRITER, HOWEVER, CAREFULLY AVOIDED A CATEGORICAL REJECTION OF NEGOTIATIONS OR COMPROMISE IN SETTling THE CAMBODIAN QUESTION. ALSO IN KEEPING WITH PAST CHINESE TREATMENT, THE ARTICLE DID NOT CONDENM KHMER LEADERS OTHER THAN LON NOL.

3. THE ARTICLE SEEMS INTENDED PRIMARILY TO EMBARASS THE SOVIETS IN ALGIERS. IT BEGAN AND CONCLUDED WITH A DESCRIPTION OF THE RGNUC'S PARTICIPATION IN THE NON-ALIGNED CONFERENCE AS THE "SOLE-LEGAL GOVERNMENT AT CAMBODIA," AND IT STRESSED SIHANOUK'S PERSONAL STANDING AT THE CONFERENCE, ELSEWHERE IN THE THIRD OWRLD AND INSIDE CAMBODIA. THE ARTICLE EXPLOITED THESE DEVELOPMENTS TO UNDERSCORE THE "AWKWARD SITUATION" FOR "SOVIET SOCIAL-IMPERIALISM" CREATED BY ITS CONTINUING RELATIONS WITH THE "LON NOL CLIQUE."

4. COMMENT: HIGH-LEVEL PRC REFERENCES TO CAMBODIA REMAIN SPARSE AND PERSISTENTLY AVOID PROJECTING FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS. IN HIS REPORT TO THE 10TH PARTY CONGRESS, FOR EXAMPLE, CHOU REFERRED ONLY BRIEFLY AND IN THE PAST TENSE TO VICTORIES AGAINST "US AGGRESSION" IN VIETNAM, LAOS AND CAMBODIA. AND CHI PENG-FEI IN A TOAST ON DRV NATIONAL DAY MADE A PERFUNCTORY CALL FOR CESSATION OF ALL US "MILITARY INTERVENTION" IN CAMBODIA (HONG KONG 8868). IN ONE TERSE SENTENCE CHI ALSO OFFERED THE PRC'S FIRST PUBLIC ENDORSEMENT OF THE RGNUC STATEMENT OF AUG 15, 1973

5. PEKING'S LOW POSTURE ON CAMBODIA, HOWEVER, WAS EMBARRASSED BY SIHANOUK'S RECENT UPI INTERVIEW IN WHICH HE SAID THE CHINESE PROMISED TO MAKE UP IN EW SUPPLIES TO THE DRV AMMUNITION AND ARMS THE LATTER WOULD SUPPLY TO THE CAMBODIAN "PEOPLE'S FORCES." THIS AGREEMENT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SIHANOUK IMPLIED, WAS WORKED OUT DURING PHAM VAN DONG'S STOPOVER IN PEKING ON AUG 16 AND 17. HOWEVER, DIFFERENCES AT THAT TIME BETWEEN THE PRC AND THE DRV WERE SUGGESTED BY ANOMALIES IN NCNA AND VNA REPORTING OF PHAM VAN DONG'S MEETINGS WITH CHOU AND SIHANOUK (HONG KONG 8438.) SIMILARLY, THE ATMOSPHERE OF LE DUAN'S RECENT MEETING WITH CHOU WAS NOT CHACTERIZED BY NCNA AND UNLIKE LAST YEAR CHOU DID NOT ATTEND THE DRV NATIONAL DAY RECEPTION ON SEPT 1. WE SPECULATE THAT THE CHINESE WERE LESS FORTHCOMING ON THE QUESTION OF ARMS

SUPPLY THAN DESIRED BY HANOI. THIS WOULD BE IN KEEPING WITH CHINAS
APPARENT PRIMARY CONCERN IN REGARD TO CAMBODIA AT THE PRESENT TIME:
AVOIDANCE OF AN ESCALATION OF US AND DRV ROLES AND THUS OF A DE-
STABILIZATION OF THE INDOCHINA SITUATION.
OSBORN

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